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### NEWS RELEASE

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Rep. John D. Dingell, Chairman

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Environmental Justice, Superfund and Leaking Underground Storage Tank Cleanups Would Suffer Under Proposed Cuts

Washington, DC — Congressmen Albert Wynn (D-MD), Chairman of the Subcommittee on Environment and Hazardous Materials, said today that President Bush's Fiscal Year (FY) 2009 Budget would make drastic cuts to important Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) programs.

"The President's FY 2009 budget requests \$7.1 billion for the EPA. Compared to last year's funding level enacted by Congress, the Bush Administration's budget proposal would dramatically cut spending by \$400 million for environmental programs that are pivotal to the protection of public health and safety," Wynn said.

This devastating downward spiral in funding for environmental protection is even more significant when compared to EPA's authorized budget five years ago. Congress authorized \$8.4 billion in spending for the EPA in Fiscal Year

2004. The President's budget request represents an incredible \$1.3 billion cut from this level.

"National budgets should reflect our national priorities," said Wynn. "Clearly, President Bush has not made environmental protection a priority during the course of his Administration."

Wynn also criticized the FY09 Budget for failing to adequately address environmental justice issues. Last year, \$7.1 million was authorized for the EPA's Office of Environmental Justice. The President's FY09 Budget requests only \$4.6 million for the program, proposing a cut of \$2.5 million from the FY08 enacted level.

"Minority and low-income populations often live close to industrial zones, power plants and toxic waste sites," Wynn said. "These conditions have serious implications for the health and well being of people of color. For example, people of color are three times more likely to be hospitalized or die from asthma and other respiratory illnesses linked to air pollution. It is unconscionable for the Administration to shortchange the very programs aimed at addressing these disparities."

The Superfund program would also suffer under the President's FY09 Budget request. At a time when progress on remediating sites has fallen dramatically, funding for remedial actions at these sites would be cut by \$4.5 million. It is well documented that there is not enough funding for sites requiring cleanup.

"By EPA's own estimation, one in four Americans lives within four miles of a Superfund site," Wynn added. "There are numerous toxic waste sites on the National Priorities List where cleanup has been delayed due to a lack of funds. The cuts to the remedial program proposed in the President's FY 2009 cuts would exacerbate this problem."

Wynn also noted that the President's budget would shortchange the Leaking Underground Storage Tanks (LUST) Trust Fund, which helps pay to clean up leaking underground storage tanks that pollute drinking water supplies. Congress enacted legislation last year that provided \$102.1 million for the LUST Trust Fund for Fiscal Year 2008. The President's Fiscal Year 2009 Budget would cut funding by \$29.8 million and would provide only \$72.3 million for the LUST Trust Fund.

"The Government Accountability Office has found that nationally we will need over \$12 billion in public funds to clean up leaking tanks and the EPA has confirmed that over 108,000 releases from leaking underground storage tanks have not been addressed," Wynn said. "Meanwhile, the President proposes further reducing funding for the LUST Trust Fund."

In May of last year, Wynn wrote House Appropriators to request increased funding for EPA public health programs. Wynn and Congresswoman Hilda Solis (D-CA), the Vice Chair of the Environment and Hazardous Materials Subcommittee, wrote a similar letter last year requesting increased funding for EPA's Office of Environmental Justice.

Prepared by the Committee on Energy and Commerce

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